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Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 (ISO) W
---------- 032446
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FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2904
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T MOGADISCIO 0745

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, US, SA, SO
SUBJECT: ARAB SUMMIT AND SOVIET BASE ISSUE

REF: A) JIDDA 3505 B) MOGADISCIO 0672

1. DESPITE TOUGH LINE TAKEN BY SAG WITH SIAD IN JIDDA, WE SEE
LITTLE EVIDENCE THAT ARAB DIPLOMATS IN MOGADISCIO ARE URGING SIMILAR
POSITION WITH THEIR CAPITALS OR WOULD ENDORSE SAUDI HARD LINE AT ANY
ARAB SUMMIT CONFERENCE IN MOGADISCIOWON ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN
THAT ARAB EMISSARIES HERE ILLY REFLECT THEIR GOVERNMENTS'
POSITION, NEVERTHELESS WE WONDER WHETHER SAG WOULD BE ABLE STAND
ALONE AT SUMMIT AGAINST MORE CONCILIATORY ARAB PRESSURES ON BEHALF
OF SIAD, ESPECIALLY AT A SUMMIT WHICH -- IF IT DOES TAKE
PLACE --
WILL PUT EMPHASIS ON ARAB SOLIDARITY ABOVE EVERYTHING CWBS. GIVEN
THAT POSSIBILITY, THEN POSITION TAKEN BY DEPUTY FONMIN MAS'UD (JIDDA
3505) WOULD BEST SERVE SAG'S PURPOSES. SAG'S DEMANDS OF SIAD CONCERNI
NG
SOVIET PRESENCE, ISLAMIC LAW AND MARXISM SHOULD BE SATISFIED PRIOR
TO, AND NOT DURING, ANY ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT, FOR REASONS GIVEN BELOW.

2. ALL ARAB ENVOYS IN SOMALIS RECOGNIZE EXTENT OF SOVIET INFLUENCE
WITH SIAD. IN SOME CASES, THEIR INFORMATION IS MORE NEGATIVE THAN
OURS REGARDING SOVIET PRESENCE (EGYPTIANS, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE
CONVINCED THAT THERE ARE 7,000 SOVIET ADVISORS -- INCLUDING
FAMILIES SAA NOW IN SOMALIA). MOST ARAB DIPLOMATS BELIEVE HOWEVER
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THAT SIAD CANNOT EASILY RID HIMSELF OF SOVIET PRESENCE OR SOVIET INFLUENCE AT THIS TIME (CURIOUSLY ENOUGH, IRAQI AMBASSADOR IS EXCEPTION TO THIS ASSESSMENT). THEY BELIEVE SOVIET INFLUENCE IN SOMALI ARMY IS SIMPLY TOO STRONG FOR SIAD.

3. WHILE ARAB ENVOYS RECOGNIZE SIAD'SHOARXIST ORIENTATION, THEY BELIEVE THIS IS PASSING PHENOMENON AND THAT SIAD IS AT HEART A POLITICAL PRAGMATIST WHOSE SOLE CONCERN AT PRESENT IS IN MAINTAINING HIS POWER POSITION AT WHATEVER COST. THEY ALSO BELIEVE HOWEVER THAT SIAD CANNOT HOLD OUT PERMANENTLY AGAINST ANTI-SOVIET AND PRO-ARAB PRESSURES -- IN SNA, IN GSDR AND AMONG SOMALI PEOPLE. THEY THINK THAT ULTIMATELY POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CONFESSUJTNBD TIES WHICH LINK SOMALIA WITH ARAB WORLD WILL BRING SOMALIA FULLY INTO ARAB FOLD. IN MEANTIME, MOST ARAB DIPLOMATS BELIEVE ARAB COUNTRIES SHOULD DO WHAT THEY CAN TO PROVIDE SOMALIA WITH FINANCIAL HELP TO STRENGTHEN ARAB POSITION.
X

4. ARAB PERCEPTION OF SIAD IS THUS COLORED BY ARAB PATERNALISM, BY DEGREE OF TOLERANCE, AND BY A SORT OF MICAWBER-LIKE BELIEF THAT IF ARABS STAND AROUND LONG ENOUGH LOOKING HOPEFUL, SOMETHING IS BOUND TO TURN UP. ARAB DIPLOMATS HERE -- LIBYANS, IRAQIS, SYRIANS, EGYPTIANS, SUDANESE, KUWAITS, ETC., -- ARE THEREFORE NOT RPT NOT DISPOSED TO CONFRONT SIAD WITH HARSH EITHER/OR CHOICES. THEY BELIEVE THAT OVER LONG-TERM, ARAB INTERESTS ARE BEST SERVED BY PATIENCE AND MODERATION. (ALTHOUGH I NOW FIND THAT THEIR PATIENCE IS WEARING VERY THIN.)

5. ARAB PERCESPTION OF SOVIET BASE ISSUE REFLECTS SAME CAUTION. ARABS DIPLOMATS BELIEVE SOVIETS HAVE FACILITIES HERE BUT THEY ARE LESS CERTAIN AS TO THEIR PHYSICAL NATURE AND SOMEWHAT VAGUE ABOUT THEIR SIGNIFICANCE. FOR THEM, SOVIET MILITARY OR NAVAL FACILITIES ARE NOT RPT NOT THE MOST SERIOUS ASPECT OF SIAD'S COMPLICITY WITH SOVIETS (THEY ARE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT MARXISM AND DENIAL OF ISLAMIC LAW). ARABS ALSO HAVE A FAIRLY REALISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF SOMALIA'S LIMITED MILITARY CAPABILITY. - MOST ARAB DIPLOMATS HERE COME FROM ARAB NATIONS POSSESSING ARMAMENTS, AIRFIELDS, MISSILES AND HARBOR INSTALLATIONS WHICH BY CONTRAST TEND N REDUO #
SOMALIA'S EQUIVALENT
FACILITIES TO SOMEWHAT LESS THAN MAJOR IMPORTANCE. THIS IS
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IMPORTANT PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR IN THEIR PERCEPTION OF SOVIET BASE QUESTION.

6. GIVEN THAT VIEW OF SIAD AND SOVIET PRESENCE ISSUE, WE WONDER WHAT PROSPECTS MIGHT BE THAT AT ANY FORTHCOMING
ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT
IN MOGADISCIO, SIAD MIGHT MANIPULATE ARAB ATTITUDES TO HIS ADVANTAGE, FINESSE SOVIET BASE ISSUE, ISOLATE OR DILUTE SAUDI DEMANDS, AND

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GET OFF THE HOOK SO FAR AS HIS CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS IS CONCERNED -
- IF IT DOES TAKE PLACE HERE -- WILL BE LOOKING MORE TO HORIZON
AND MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM THAN TOHIOCAL SOMALI ISSUES. IF SOVIET BASE
ISSUE DOES BECOME CONTENTIOUS ITEM -- WHICH WE DOUBT -- THEN WE CAN
WELL IMAGINE SIAD STAGE-MANAGING A VISIT BY ARAB DELEGATIOMMOR
JOURNALISTS TO BERBERA AND ENVIRONS TO DRAW TEETH OF IMPERIALIST
ALLEGATIONS ABOUT SOVIET BASES. ARAB SUMMIT MEETING, IN SHORT, WILL
NOT RPT NOT PROVIDE FORUM IN WHICH ARAB HARDLINERS, LIKE SAG, WILL
HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO WRESTLE SIAD'S FEET TO THE FIRE.

8. AS MATTER OF TACTICS THEN, LINE TAKEN BY DEPUTY FONMIN MAS'UD
(JIDDA 3505) THAT SAG DEMANDS MUST BE MET BY SIAD BEFORE ANY
ARAB LEAGUE SU-
MMIT IS ONE WHICH WILL GIVE SIAD MOST PROBLEMS AND
BEST SERVE SARUJS PURPOSES. IF THOSE DEMANDS NOT RPT NOT MET AND
SAG FAILS TO PARTICIPATE IN SUMMIT, OWEN SUMMIT ITSELF MAY COLLAPSE.
THIS WOULD PROBABLY HAVE SERIOUS ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES FOR SIAD
AND PERHAPS INTERNAL POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS AS WELL.

9.HFM #
J DETERMIED TO CONFRONT SIAD WITH HARD CHOICES IN
EFFORT TO BREAK STATUS QUO IN SOMALIA, THEN MAS'UD'S LINE IS ONE
SAG SHOULD STICK WITH AND URGE OTHER ARABS TO ENDORSE AS WELL.
HAMRICK

NOTE BY OC/T: #AS RECEIVED

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